

# City fathers didn't want a 'foolish' birthdate

Provo will be technically 135 years old tomorrow, April 3. I said technically, because actually it's April 1, and thereby hangs a tale.

For years, Provo's birthday was celebrated on March 12. This probably started from J. Marinus Jensen's 1924 History of Provo which said the first settlers arrived here "about March 12" in 1849. On this point J. Marinus Jensen was wrong, although he pioneered the way with the first history of Provo in one volume.

The fact that the March 12 date was wrong began to emerge several years ago when N.L. Christensen, now editor emeritus of the Daily Herald, discovered the discrepancy when doing research in LDS archives. He discovered a planning meeting held on March 17 in Salt Lake City, before the colonizers had ever left.

Verl G. Dixon was then mayor of Provo and decided (with a little prodding from me) that we had better get it right. He appointed a committee to research it, including Roy Hafen and his late wife Ann, the late Gustive O. Larson, and myself. The first three were all established professional historians. I guess I made it because I prodded the mayor.

We named Gus Larson to go straight to the horse's mouth (in this case the LDS Church archives) and dig out the answer. He found it in the original journal of George Washington Bean Jr., a member of the first colonizing party. George Washington Bean Jr. wrote in his diary that on April 1, 1849, the first settlers reached and camped on the north bank of Provo River. It was his 18th birthday, he said, an event he was not likely to get confused or forget.



AS IT LOOKS  
TO LUKE

**theron  
h. luke**

But Mayor Dixon and the then city commission were not about to designate Provo's birthday on April Fool's Day. They never owned up to this as their motive, but it's obvious.

So they did the next best thing, and I think with a fair degree of validity. They picked April 3, which was the day the colonizers began the construction of old Fort Utah on the south side of the river.

It's as good a date as any, far better than the incorrect March 12, and as I say, it had a fair degree of validity. So by official city commission fiat, April 3 was officially designated as Provo's birthday.

The first settlers (and you get conflicting reports as to their exact number) built the fort about where the memorial fort now stands just south of the river and east of the Lower Geneva Road. Its log houses lined the out boundaries with stockade stakes driven in between the gaps in the houses, with gates on the east and west sides. For those of you who care, it was 40 by 20 rods. It had high platform in the center with a cannon, high enough to fire over the walls and scare the Indians, which is about all it ever did. All, that is, except cost George Washington Bean Jr. a forearm in a latter misfiring mishap.

But the site of the old Fort Utah had a curiously modern ring. It was too wet. The next year, in April 1850, they moved to higher and drier ground, to the site of Provo's North, or Sowiette (after a friendly Indian) Park on Fifth North and Fifth West.

An original plot 11 blocks square (11 blocks in each direction) was surveyed out. It became

## Dee S. Moosman

PLEASANT GROVE — Dee Sheridan Moosman, 57, Pleasant Grove, died March 31, 1984, at his home.

He was born May 22, 1926, in Boulder, the son of Lester and Gertrude Ormond Moosman. He married Violet Porter on Feb. 25, 1948, in Fredonia, Ariz. Their marriage was later solemnized in the Manti LDS Temple.

He attended schools in Boulder and Escalante. He was a member of the Pleasant Grove 4th Ward, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

He was a veteran of World War II, having served in the U.S. Navy. He worked at Geneva Steel for 27 years before his retirement.

Surviving are his wife of Pleasant Grove; six sons; Brent Moosman, Salt Lake City; Sheridan Moosman, Houston, Texas; Stewart Moosman, Starks, La.; Dallas Moosman, Pleasant Grove; Travis Moosman, Bountiful; Wesley Moosman, American Fork; 11 grandchildren; one brother, Ferril Moosman, Annabella.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday in the Pleasant Grove 4th Ward Chapel, 800 N. First West. Friends may call at Olpin Family Mortuary, 500 S. Third East, Pleasant Grove, on Monday from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. or Tuesday at the church one hour before services. Burial will be in the Pleasant Grove City Cemetery with full military rites by VFW District 4.

## Cornell B. Cameron

PROVO — Cornell Brown Cameron, 73, Provo, died March 29, 1984, at the Utah Valley Care Center in Provo.

He was born in Panguitch on June 24, 1910, to David Eccles and Dora Arminta Brown Cameron. He married Ellen Thomas in Ely, Nev., in 1957. She died in 1972.

He was reared in Panguitch and educated in the schools there. He was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the Pacific Theater. He was a

past member of the American Foreign Wars.

Survivors include his wife, Eccles Cameron, and two sons, Cameron, O.

Services will be held in the Sundberg S. State, Ore., one hour before the funeral in the Provo

## Florence

OREM — Florence Downs, 94, died March 28, 1984, in Orem.

She was born in Cooksville, Tenn., to Perillda B. and William A. Downs. She died Dec. 8, 1968.

She was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and held a ship position. She was more than 50 years old and continued to work more years.

She moved to Orem in 1901 and lived as a homemaker. She was her home, and her greatest love was to take great care of and in share with family.

Survivors include two daughters, Elvin Downs and William (Becky) Fork; Mrs. F. na; two sisters, Pollard, Bur (Helen) Cutler; children; 55 great-great-

Services will be held in the Orem Second North S. State, Ore., and at the funeral home one hour before the burial in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery.



## Helping hand

Individuals interested in volunteering to help with the following needs may call United Way's Voluntary Action Center, 374-8108.

— A night relief volunteer is needed at the Center for Women and Children in Crisis, 6 p.m. to 8 a.m., to answer the hotline and help women in the shelter.

— Provo City needs volunteers to help fill sandbags.

— Recreation for the Adult Handicapped needs volunteers at the Orem Recreation Center, 5:30-7 p.m. to help with the swimming program.

— Farm families and pet owners are needed to interview residents of the Hidden Hollow Rest Home on a field trip to observe farm and domesticated animals.

— The technical services department at the Provo Public Library needs two clerk/typists to prepare books for circulation.

— The Foster Parent Program urgently needs c

## Y. schedules afford

PROVO — Innovative ways to reduce housing costs and improve housing opportunities will be examined by industry, government and academic experts during a forum on affordable housing Thursday at Brigham Young University.

"Many students graduating today wonder if they will ever be able to afford a new home," said Leon Rogers, assistant professor of building construction at BYU. "With the cost of land escalating and the inflation that was prevalent in the 1970s, most young people can no longer qualify for a new home."

He said interest rates and labor and material costs have forced many home builders and developers to be creative and to re-evaluate their traditional construction practices.

The BYU program is part of a series of forums